



Ask a Pharmacist App

Quick Start Guide



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration



Overview

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Ask a Pharmacist mobile application (app) allows Veterans to access information about VA pharmacies and medications easily – with the comfort of knowing the information is valid and from trusted sources. Some Ask a Pharmacist App features conveniently connect you to special tracking or messaging features in My HealtheVet where you can access your medication and health information as well as learn about pharmacy-related topics.

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Prerequisites

Anyone can access the informational resources about medications in the Ask a Pharmacist App. However, to use some of the features the Ask a Pharmacist App helps you learn about, you must be a Veteran receiving VA care and have an Advanced or Premium My HealtheVet account. The Ask a Pharmacist App allows you to easily link to features within My HealtheVet, but does not duplicate them or allow them to operate within the app itself.

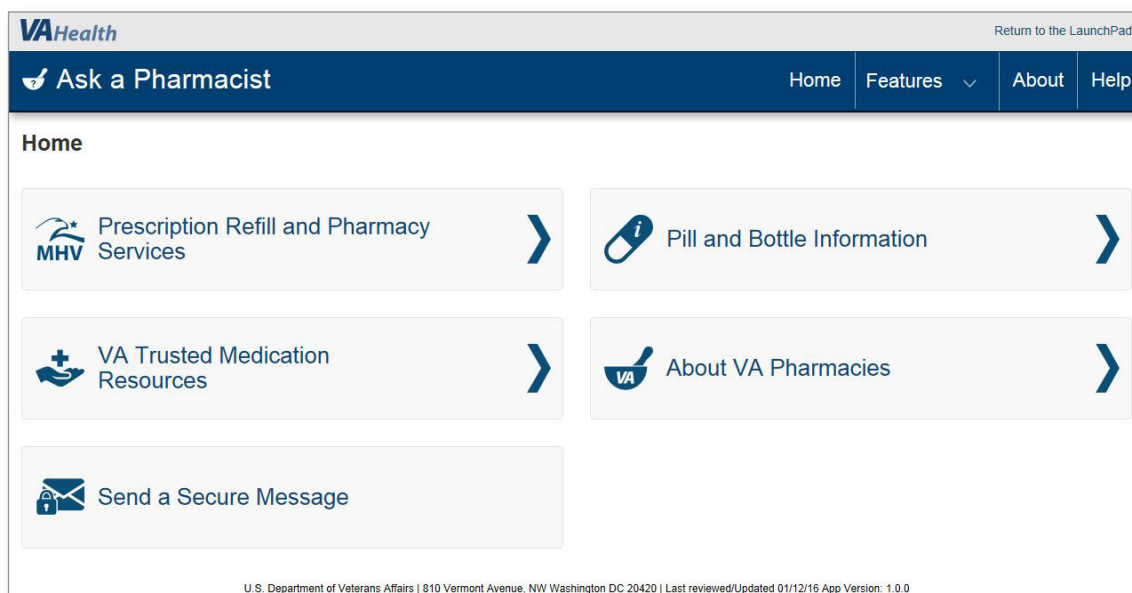
2

Setting up a My HealtheVet account for seamless connection with the app

Some Ask a Pharmacist App features conveniently connect you to tracking or messaging features in My HealtheVet where you can access your health information. However, you have to be a Veteran receiving VA care and have an Advanced or Premium My HealtheVet account to use these features. To take full advantage of VA's health care tools and ensure your app seamlessly connects to My HealtheVet, be sure your My HealtheVet account type has the level of access you need to use the features in My HealtheVet - which is a Premium account. Here is an overview of the process to create and upgrade a My HealtheVet account:

1. Create a Basic My HealtheVet account by completing the [registration page](#). When you register as a VA Patient, your profile information is linked to VA/DoD records. When this happens, you are given an Advanced Account (an Advanced Account is required to refill prescriptions).
2. Once successfully registered with an Advanced Account, you can choose to upgrade to a Premium account to get access to all the features in My HealtheVet.

To learn more about the My HealtheVet [account types](#), read the complete steps for [upgrading your account](#) and access the [VA Release of Information](#) (ROI) form (10-5345a-MHV). Then when you select the link within the Ask a Pharmacist App that takes you to these special features in My HealtheVet, you will be asked to log in with your User ID and Password. If you have already logged into My HealtheVet in the same session you are using the Ask a Pharmacist App, you will not have to log into My HealtheVet again, unless you have been inactive in My HealtheVet for 20** minutes. (**As of January 2016, the timeout for inactivity is 20 minutes, and this is subject to change.)

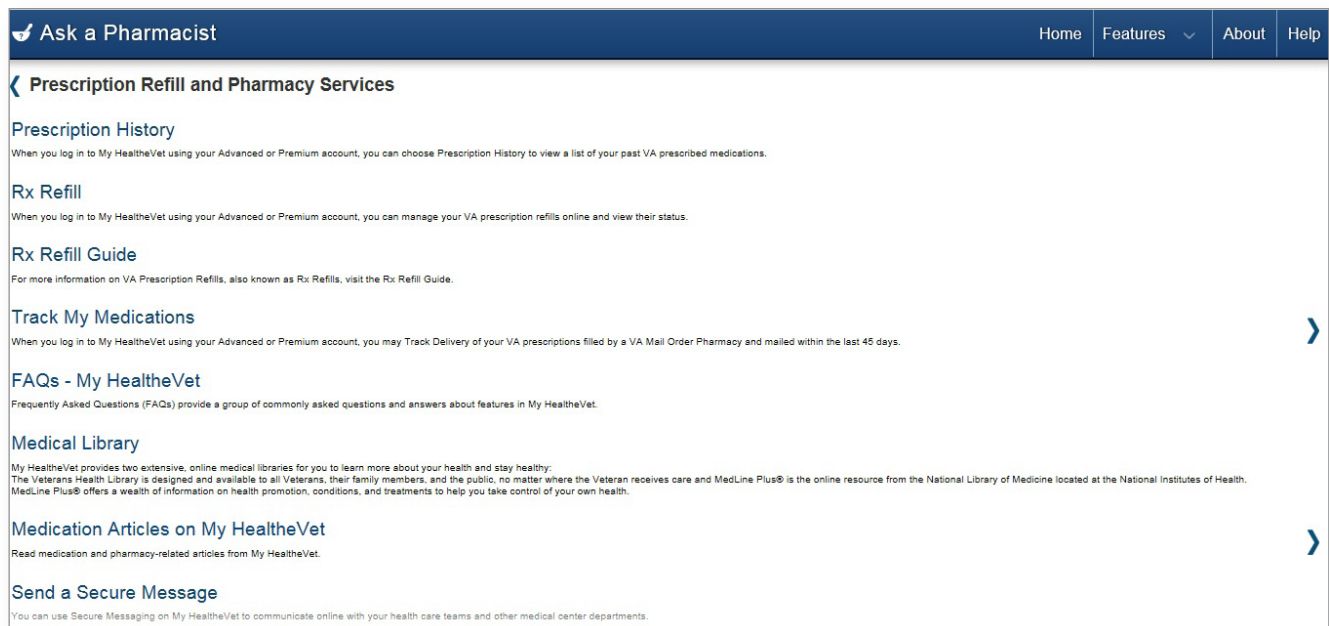


Prescription Refill and Pharmacy Services

Learn about prescription refill and pharmacy services, including the ability to refill and track your VA prescriptions. You can access this information either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu, and then tap **Prescription Refill and Pharmacy Services**. You will go to a Prescription Refill and Pharmacy Services screen, and tap on the names of the kinds of services you would like to access:

- Prescription History
- Rx Refill
- Rx Refill Guide
- Track My Medications
- FAQs-My HealtheVet
- Medical Library
- Medication Articles on My HealtheVet
- Send a Secure Message

Most selections will direct you to an external website, which will usually be My HealtheVet. To return to the Home screen, tap either **Home** or the back arrow in the upper left corner of the screen.



Pill and Bottle Information

Learn how to read a prescription label and identify pills by sight by accessing **Pill and Bottle Information**. You can access this information either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu by tapping Pill and Bottle Information. You will go to a Pill and Bottle Information screen. Tap the name of the type of information you would like to view:

- Pill Bottle Information
- Pill Identification

Depending on the information you tap, you may go to an external website. To return to the Home screen, tap either **Home** or the back arrow in the upper left corner of the screen.

Pill Bottle Information

Label Example
Yours May Look Slightly Different

Directions on how to take your medication

VETERAN NAME (LAST, FIRST)
TAKE 1 TABLET BY MOUTH
TWICE A DAY

Medication precautions

Avoid alcoholic beverages.
May cause dizziness.

Medication fill and expiration dates

IBUPROFEN 400 MG TAB
Rx# 6543210 Refills Left: 1 (of 3)
Qty: 60 TAB

Prescription number

PRESCRIBER NAME
VAMC FACILITY NAME
000XX (1026/7/00001) PH: (800) 000-0000

Pharmacy address and phone

Quantity of prescription

Medication Safety Tips

- Keep out of the reach of children
- Store your medications securely
 - Keep in original container
 - Avoid storing in hot humid places
- Do not share your medication with others
- Do not keep outdated medicine or medicine you no longer need
 - Do not place in trash where children and pets may find
 - Check with your pharmacist on how to safely dispose
- Tell your provider or pharmacist if you are taking any herbals, vitamins or any other medication not provided by the VA


IMPORTANT NOTE: This information is intended to supplement, not substitute for, the expertise and judgment of your physician, pharmacist or other health care professional. This information does not indicate whether use of this drug is safe, appropriate, or effective for you. If you have any questions about your medication or think you may be having a reaction to any medication please contact your doctor or pharmacist.


VA Trusted Medication Resources


Access reliable, VA-approved resources about various types of drugs as well as information on administering and disposing of medications that you may be taking. You can access this information either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu, and then tap **VA Trusted Medication Resources**. You will go to a VA Trusted Medication Resources screen. Tap the name of a resource you would like to learn more about:

- Consumer Drug, Herbal & Supplement Information
- Drug Interactions and Adverse Drug Events
- FAQ-VA National Medication Formulary
- How to Properly Administer a Medication
- Know Your Medication Label
- Medication Disposal
- Pill Identification

Depending on your selection, you may go to an external website. To return to the Home screen, tap either **Home** or the back arrow in the upper left corner of the screen.



Return to the LaunchPad


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VA Trusted Medication Resources


Consumer Drug, Herbal & Supplement Information

Go to MedWatch online and submit a voluntary report of adverse events that you observe or suspect for human medical products, including serious drug side effects, product use errors, product quality problems, and therapeutic failures.



Drug Interactions and Adverse Drug Events

A Drug Interaction Checker explains the mechanism of each drug interaction, the level of significance of the interaction (major, moderate or minor), and in certain cases, can provide the recommended course of action to manage the interaction.



FAQ - VA National Medication Formulary

Ask A Pharmacist provides links to general questions and answers on medications and medication management from trusted resources.

How to Properly Administer a Medication

Your medicine can only work correctly if it is administered properly in the body. This link takes you to helpful illustrations that show the right way to use eye, ear, and nose drops; eye ointments; inhalers; and suppositories.

Know Your Medication Label


A standardized patient-centric label was created to increase each Veteran's understanding of how to take his or her medications.

About VA Pharmacies

Easily locate your VA pharmacy, and learn how VA pharmacies operate. You can access this information either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu, and then tap **About VA Pharmacies**. You will go to an About VA Pharmacies screen. Tap on the information you would like to view:

- Find My Facility
- How VA Pharmacies Operate
- How VA Pharmacists Help Veterans

Depending on your selection, you may go to an external website. To return to the Home screen, tap either **Home** or the back arrow in the upper left corner of the screen.


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How Do VA Pharmacies Operate?

Prescription drug services are a major component of outpatient services provided to eligible patients of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These services include direct and indirect patient medication counseling, drug and supply dispensing services, and clinical pharmacist activities as a component of the interdisciplinary health care team. VA Pharmacies are committed to providing exceptional quality and service and strive to be the healthcare provider of choice. In an effort to provide this level of service for ALL of our Veterans, we ask that you use our service in the following ways:

- At the pharmacist's professional discretion, a short supply (partial prescription) of any **new** or **immediate need** medication may be provided for pick-up at our Outpatient Pharmacies. The majority of veterans receive all non-immediate need medications through mail order.
- All applicable prescriptions and refills will be processed through our mail order pharmacy system. We ask that refill requests be at least **10 days** prior to running out of medication using the automated telephone refill (ATR) system or MyHealtheVet
- It is VHA policy that all Veterans receiving care at more than one VHA facility must have care coordinated by the "preferred facility", and that non-preferred facilities must expedite care provided to traveling Veterans with unexpected medical needs. These needs include the ability to obtain refills for prescriptions from their preferred VHA facility.
- No prescription can be filled for more than a 3 month (90-day) supply of medication. No prescription may exceed 12 months of therapy (including refills). For some prescriptions, a one- month (30 days) or less limitation may be established.
[See Definition of Controlled Substance Schedules \(DEA\)](#)
- Prescription refills for recurring and/or continuous need medications and medical supplies must be dispensed in accordance with the authorization of the provider. Local facility policy may further limit the number of refills to the next scheduled clinic visit. *Prescriptions can be refilled only on a request from the patient and must not be automatically dispatched.*
- Prescriptions written by one VA facility for dispensing by another VA facility is discouraged. The facility of the provider prescribing the medication or supply is responsible for all dispensing. This does not apply to prescriptions written at a physically separate location of the same facility.
- All patients, including those discharged from inpatient facilities, are to be educated about their medications prior to, or at the time of, dispensing. Such counseling needs to be tailored to the patient by focusing on their individualized drug regimen.

Send a Secure Message

Secure Messaging is a feature available within My HealtheVet that allows you to send a secure, protected question or note to your VA care team. The Ask a Pharmacist App links to information about this feature within My HealtheVet. You can access this information either on the Home screen or from the Features drop-down menu, and then tap **Send a Secure Message**. You will go to a page on the My HealtheVet website where you can learn more.

In order to send a Secure Message, you have to have a My HealtheVet Premium account, and then log into My HealtheVet with your credentials to use the feature within the site.

Secure Messaging

Have you ever had a question about a prescription? Or, maybe you just wanted to ask your doctor or another member of your VA health care team a simple question? Now, VA offers Secure Messaging - a way to communicate with your VA health care team. You can do this without waiting on the phone or having to fight traffic to get to your local VA health care facility. Secure Messaging isn't a replacement for an in-person visit, nor should it be used in emergencies. But some exchanges between you and your VA health care team may not need an appointment, so why not just send a Secure Message?

My HealtheVet's Secure Messaging improves the connection between you and your VA health care team. You can use it to ask about your VA appointments, medications, and your lab results or to have routine questions answered. Similar to email, Secure Messaging allows you to write a message, save drafts, review your sent messages and maintain a record of your conversations. Since the lines of communication are open, it helps make your VA appointments more productive because your VA health care team has more than just notes from your last appointment.

Don't worry - this isn't another account you have to check every day. You can set your preferences to notify your personal email when a Secure Message is waiting for you in your My HealtheVet inbox. Use Secure Messaging to keep your VA health care team close. It's there when you need it - just as it should be.

Member Login

User ID:

Password:

Login

[Forgot User ID?](#)
[Forgot Password?](#)
 First time My HealtheVet user?
Register today!
REGISTER

Related Links

- [House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)

Help and Additional Information

More resources, such as a User Manual, Slideshow and FAQs, are available at ***mobile.va.gov/training***.

If you need help with the Ask a Pharmacist App, dial 1-877-470-5947 to speak with a VA representative. The Help Desk is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT. For TTY assistance, dial 711. For clinical questions regarding your personal medical information, please contact your VA care team.

You should never use this app in an emergency. If you encounter an emergency, call your local medical center or dial 911. If you feel your information may have been compromised, contact your local VA facility to obtain the contact information for your Privacy Officer. To locate your local VA facility, visit VA's Facility Locator:

<http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1>.